THE VISITATION OF THE SICK

WITH SCRIPTURAL READINGS AND THE OFFICE FOR COMMUNION OF THE SICK

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THE VISITATION OF THE SICK

EXPLANATORY READINGS

BY THE

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WITH A PREFACE BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER

THE OFFICES FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK AND THE COMMUNION OF THE SICK ARE ADDED

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

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NOTE

THESE Readings represent long and varied experience at sick-beds, deep sympathy, and sobriety of doctrine and feeling. Their helpfulness has already been well tried. I believe that they are qualified to do wider service, and I pray that they may be enabled by the Holy Spirit to minister to the soul's health of many sufferers.

F. J. CESTR.

Whitsuntide, 1909.

PREFACE

It is difficult to use the Visitation Service as it stands. And yet one must feel that it is the Church's method, authoritatively set forth, of dealing with the sick, and that it is imperative that its spirit, at least, should be observed.

The explanatory readings are an attempt to embody this spirit. It is often advisable to leave the book with the sick person that they may be studied, as well as read by the clergyman. The author's apology for printing them must be that he has so used them, and, he has reason to believe, with benefit.

THE VISITATION OF THE SICK

INTRODUCTORY

I

"Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it."

THESE words are ordained by the Prayer-book to be said by the clergyman when he enters the house of a sick person. They are taken, you will remember, from our Lord's directions to the seventy disciples who were sent out to prepare for His coming. As they did, so are we to do, and with the same object—to prepare the way for Jesus Christ.

Peace be to this house. We are intended, first of all, to express by these words how we feel towards you. We wish to do you good, to help you in every possible way. You are mournful and sad perhaps. We mourn with you, but only that you may be comforted. You are tempted to weep and

lament. We want to turn your sorrow into joy. Do you believe that we can do this?

We only hope to do it, because these words also express God's feeling towards you. He wants you to be at peace with Him. He sent the Prince of Peace into the world to proclaim peace to those that were near and those that were far off. It is our Saviour's bequest to his people, "My peace I leave with you." His salutation after His resurrection was, "Peace be unto you." It is the greatest blessing which the Church has to bestow, The Peace of God which passeth all understanding.

You feel, do you not, that you would give much to be at peace with God? I will try and show you how you can make sure of this. But in the meantime take comfort in the thought that God wants to be at peace with you. If there is enmity, it is not on His side. "God is love." "We love because He first loved us." Oh, be reconciled to Him. We beseech you in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God." "Acquaint thyself with Him and be at peace."

II

"Know you certainly, it is God's visitation."

The Prayer-book makes a very emphatic statement here. It seems to be a point much to be insisted upon that, before all, you should believe and realize that God's hand is laid upon you, and that God's voice speaks to you in this illness.

Do you believe this? It teaches that there is something more than meets the eye, something of what we call providential about it, whereas you may be inclined to look upon it as perfectly natural. You caught a cold and neglected it, or you met with an accident, or you ate something which disagreed with you, or you were exposed to some infection, or something went wrong in your body which is so complicated and mysterious; but it was all perfectly natural. Such things happen every day; few people escape.

Yet is it not one reason why the Bible was written, to show us that God works by

natural means? Take the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, quoted in the exhortation which I have read to you. It was written to comfort and encourage Christians who were greatly afflicted and persecuted, and who were in danger of suffering even worse things, and the comfort supplied was this, that after all it was God's doing, His loving correction of His children; and that the enmity and cruelty of men were really the "chastening of the Lord." Or, look at our Lord's life. We know that His death was the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, fore-ordained by God before all time; we know that neither soldiers could have seized, nor Pilate condemned, unless they had been permitted by the Father, yet to the outward eye the whole transaction had a perfectly natural look; it was the case of a popular leader of whom the constituted authorities had become jealous, and whose claim to be a king made him a danger to the Roman government.

So, if "thou cam'st not to thy place by accident, it is the very place God meant for thee," believe also that this sickness is the result of no chance or accident, but the action of a Higher Power, who controls thy life for thy good. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

III

"Why was this sickness sent to me?"

THERE are certain laws of health to which God has subjected the body; it may be that you have broken some of these. Some people throw their health away by carelessness, or worse, by excess, and so the inevitable punishment follows. It may be—do not shrink from the thought—that your work on earth is done, and the time is near when you must give an account of your stewardship. But it may be God's will that you shall recover, and that your sickness will one day seem to you like a dream when one awaketh. But it will have given you a lesson, and I want to help you to learn this lesson while your mind is open to receive it. King Hezekiah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness, wrote that "by these things men live, and in all these is the life of the Spirit."

Well, the Prayer-book suggests two reasons. This sickness may be sent you to

try your patience for the example of others, that your faith may shine forth triumphant at last; or it may be intended as a correction of some fault in you.

In the first case, then, God is trying you as silver is tried and refined, as He tried Abraham and Job: as He tried His dear Son Jesus Christ, Who had to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. You sometimes feel, no doubt, that you are not fit for heaven. You cling too close to the world; you think too little of God; you are apt to be careless and thoughtless. Suffering may mend all this; rightly borne, it may sober you, wean you from the world, and enable you to sympathize with and feel for others more than you ever did before. This is that pruning of the branches of the true vine, that they may bring forth more fruit.

And, secondly, it may be sent to correct and amend in you whatever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father. He has seen some sin in you which you have not really striven against. You have not laid aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you. What is your besetting sin, the one weak point in your character, the "one thing" above all others that you lack? Perhaps you cannot say. Many

people drift through life without any self-examination. They think they are "rich and increased with goods," and know not that they are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." If you are not in too great pain and weariness, will you not try and find out the truth about yourself? "In many things we offend all." Yes; but there is generally one sin which is the master sin and the root of all the rest. Have you given way to any such? Oh, if you have, use this time of sickness to confess it to God; ask Him to forgive all that is past; to cleanse you from the guilt and power; to create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. And if it please God to restore you to health, do not go forth and forget your good resolutions. A clergyman once wrote that though he had seen many instances of what seemed to be deep and real repentance on a sick bed, so that if the sick person had died he would have been comforted by the assurance of his acceptance with God, he had hardly known any which bore the test of recovery. Pray earnestly that a work of grace may be carried on in your soul; that the Holy Spirit may convince you of sin and may lead you to the Saviour; that He may take of the things

of Christ and show them unto you. "That it may please Thee to give us true repentance, to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and to endue us with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to Thy Holy Word."

IV

"I require you to examine yourself."

SELF-EXAMINATION is a registering of the verdicts of conscience. Let me explain. Conscience is our inward adviser. We cannot account for it except on the ground that there is something supernatural and divine about it. It seems to sit, like a judge, within our hearts, and pronounce a verdict upon all our actions, our thoughts, words and deeds. A German philosopher (Kant) once said that two things filled him with amazement, the starry firmament above, and the knowledge of right and wrong within the heart of a child. And this inmost judge, when taught and guided by the Holy Spirit of God, becomes the very voice of God Himself, our Ruler and Guide.

Now, many people pay little heed to conscience. It speaks, but they disregard it. And so its voice is heard less frequently, and less clearly, until at last it may cease altogether. But he who is wise will listen

to it, and day by day make a record of its rulings. If this is done, it will become more sensitive, more enlightened, and therefore more trustworthy, more penetrated with the Spirit of God, and less hampered and perplexed by selfishness.

If you have so acted in the past, you will know pretty clearly how you stand, what your sins and shortcomings are, and what you need. But if not, it is not too late to begin now. Try to look upon your past life as under the eye of God. Pray that the Holy Spirit may help you. "It is a good plan," says Bishop Wilkinson, "to divide the life into periods: childhood, schooldays, confirmation, first Communion, entrance into the world or society, becoming the head of a family, and so on." Go over these periods in memory again and again and, if you are able, write down the results of your search. And then, telling it all out to God, humbly ask Him, for Christ's sake, to have mercy upon you and forgive you all that is past. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

V

"I will rehearse to you the Articles of our Faith that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should, or no."

I HAVE heard that a missionary who desired to translate the New Testament into the language of some savage tribe could find no word in it to express faith. At last one day he saw a frightened child run to its mother for protection, and look up in her face with perfect trust and confidence in her sheltering care. He at once asked one of the natives what they called that feeling of filial confidence, and on learning the name by which they described it, proceeded to translate "faith" always by that term. I think he was right. Nothing short of such an attitude towards God can be said to be "believing as a Christian man should." You have known the Creed probably from a child; you have heard it summarised as the revelation of a Father Who made you, a Saviour Who redeemed you, and a Holy

Spirit Who sanctifies you; but—yes, there is indeed a "but"—you may never have doubted all this, and yet your faith may not be such as a Christian man should have. For we are "saved by faith," "without faith it is impossible to please God"; and faith must, therefore, be more than mere assent, a mere admission that certain things are true; it is that attitude of mind which renders us capable of receiving blessing from God; it is loving submission of the will in the assurance that He knows best and will cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him; it is "the personal appropriation of the reconciling love of God, which has once for all been carried into effect for the race by the death of Christ"; it is a practical acquaintance with Christ, so that we may be said to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection." This is that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the means of our salvation. We cannot be surprised that such a priceless blessing must be bestowed by God—we are "justified by faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." Oh let us ask in faith, nothing wavering, and may the Almighty Lord, Who is a most strong tower to all them who put their trust in Him, be now and evermore thy

defence, and make thee know and feel that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI

"Then shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter."

After which confession, the Priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it. "Any one who could look into the soul would be startled to see what exists under the apparently commonplace exterior and the routine lives of the men and women and young people around him. What religious doubts and difficulties of which no hint is even breathed; what remorse for past sin, paralyzing all spiritual life; what cravings for a higher and better life, baffled by the feeling, 'there's no one to help me'; what a feeling of spiritual loneliness in a soul yearning for Christian sympathy and failing to find it in any one of its kinsfolk and acquaintance. The Christian ministry was put by our Lord into the midst of the world for this among other things, to minister to these needs and

cravings of the souls of men. He intended it to be a means of grace to you. I advise you not to leave the grace unsought or unused."

So says Dr. Cutts in his "Pastoral Counsels." Our Church teaches, in my opinion, that confession to God in the presence of one of His Ministers, with the view of obtaining an authoritative declaration of His pardon for the penitent sinner, is a medicine rather than a food. But you may be in need of this medicine for your comfort and restoration to spiritual health. Is your conscience troubled with any weighty matter? Would it relieve you to "purge your bosom of that perilous stuff, which weighs upon the soul?" If so, confess it to your Father, while I kneel beside you. Tell Him that you have sinned by your fault, by your most grievous fault. And I am ready to declare to you that if you confess your sins He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, and by His authority committed to me I will absolve you from all of which you are afraid, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

VII

"Then shall the Minister examine him whether he be in charity with all the world; exhorting him to forgive from the bottom of his heart all persons that have offended him; and if he hath offended any other, to ask them forgiveness; and where he hath done injury or wrong to any man, that he make amends to the uttermost of his power."

I USED to think when I was preaching to any ordinary Christian congregation, that in these smooth and comfortable days it was hardly necessary to exhort people "to forgive their enemies, and to pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them." But I soon found out that I was mistaken. People do injure each other still, either in word or deed; sometimes unconsciously or through carelessness, but sometimes from anger, hatred, or malice. I have met many who found it very hard to forgive. More than once I have ministered to a dying man whose conscience was tormented by the memory of a quarrel, and sometimes I have been able to reconcile before death those

who had quarrelled. It may be so with you. You may have inadvertently or maliciously injured another, or others may have injured you. In the first case you will now surely admit that it is high time to "agree with thine adversary quickly." Send to him—I will take the message if you like—and ask him to see you; beg his pardon for the wrong you have done, and ask for his forgiveness. If you can make further amends in deed as well as in word, do so, as you love your life. And if, on the other hand, another has injured you, I hope that you have forgiven him, or are ready to forgive him as freely as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Remember how ready He was to forgive, how He healed the officious servant whom St. Peter had wounded, how He prayed for His murderers, how, after His resurrection, "not a syllable is breathed of the treason of Judas, or of the persistent malice of the scribes. He no more resents the ills that men had wrought Him on His way through life, than the traveller who has reached his home resents the insect plague of the desert, or the tempests he has met with at sea."

And if any angry feeling still remains, pray earnestly for the grace of forgiveness. Ask God to calm you, and to keep you

calm. Remember the parable of the unforgiving servant. Notice how our Lord, when He teaches us to pray, singles out the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," and enforces it, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "Forgive and you shall be forgiven."

VIII

"If the sick person have not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his will, and to declare his debts, what he oweth, and what is owing unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his executors.

"The Minister should not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability to be liberal to the poor."

Two duties are here pressed upon you: firstly, to settle by will your property real and personal, whatever it may be; and secondly, in so doing, to be liberal to the poor.

You may have already considered and performed both these duties, or you may have performed the one and not the other.

If you have not made your will, there is no time for you like the present. The issue of your illness is uncertain: you may recover, or you may not; in either case it will be a relief to you to feel that this is done. If I can be of any help to you, as I have been to others, let me know; but your lawyer is plainly the fit person to advise

you. You will consider mercy as well as justice, will you not? and take care not to disappoint any reasonable and well-founded expectations.

And, in the second place, I am recommended earnestly to move you to be liberal to the poor, if you have the ability. I fear that this duty is often forgotten. How many wills are recorded in the newspapers disposing of large sums, but making no mention of the poor! Surely this is not well. You have been carefully nursed and tended; no expense has been spared; specialists have been called in; delicate and nourishing food has tempted you. How few have had these advantages! Will you not determine that some at least shall in future be the better for your illness? I have heard of a lady who, as a thankoffering for the recovery of her daughter from typhoid fever, provided exactly the same attention and nourishment that her daughter had had for any one case at a time that was recommended to her by the clergy of the parish. There are hospitals sadly in need of funds, charitable institutions connected either with the Church or the community at large which might do so much more if their income permitted, missions, home and foreign, simply starved for want of adequate support. Your money would

be well bestowed on any of these. Think how often Jesus Christ bids us to remember the poor. He told one man to sell all that he had and give to the poor. He advises us to lay up treasures in heaven, and this can only be done by unselfish sharing of our wealth with the sick and needy. "Blessed," says the Psalmist, "is he that provideth" for them.

IX

"If the sick person be not able to come to the church, and yet is desirous to receive the communion in his house."

If you have been a communicant before your illness, you will not need to have the privilege of receiving the Holy Communion commended to you. You will rejoice that it is offered, and you will know what is meant by preparing for it.

But if you have not been a communicant you will want to be reminded of what you, no doubt, once knew, that it is one of the Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, and that He commanded Christians to receive it in memory of Him. It is an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself," as a means whereby we receive that same inward and spiritual grace and a pledge to assure us that we do receive it. The outward and visible sign is "Bread and Wine

which the Lord hath commanded to be received," and the inward and spiritual grace is the "Body and Blood of Christ"; and the benefits which we receive thereby are the strengthening and refreshing of our souls—as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the Bread and Wine.

Do you not need these things? Do you not long for them? How careful your friends are to give you everything that will strengthen and refresh your body, and how ready you are to take them, even though, sometimes, with little appetite! Now Christ, the Good Physician, recommends you this as life-giving food for your soul. He says, in words which certainly have an application to Holy Communion, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

But perhaps you say: This is, no doubt, all true, but am I a fit and worthy person to receive it? That is an old and common difficulty. St. Paul had once to rebuke in very solemn terms some of his converts who partook unworthily. But did he tell them to cease communicating? No; they were to examine themselves, to leave off doing what was wrong, and so to "eat of that Bread and drink of that cup."

And the Prayer-book tells us plainly what preparation is necessary. We are to examine ourselves whether we truly repent of our former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; whether we have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and whether we are in "charity with all men." But these are just the questions which I have been asking you during my visits to you. Are you truly sorry for your sins? Do you wish to renounce them and leave them off? If you have sinned against man, are you ready to make reparation if possible? Do you believe in God's mercy, in Christ? Do you forgive all who have offended you, and are you in charity with all men? If so, you are a fit and proper person to receive the Holy Communion. Not because you are sinless or saintly, but because you are a repentant sinner. If you will invite two of your relations or friends to receive it with you, and will have a little table ready with a white cloth upon it, I will bring everything else that is necessary, and will come to you on whatever day and at whatever time is most convenient to you.

* * * * *

O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

X

"Grant that he may take his sickness patiently."

The Communion of the Sick differs from the ordinary Communion Service, in that, for the sake of brevity, what is known as the ante-Communion Service is omitted, and a special Collect, Epistle, and Gospel only are used. The Collect seems to give us one thought which has not been dwelt upon before. It is, the need of patience.

People sometimes speak of celebrating the Holy Communion with a special intention. Whether this be possible or in harmony with the English Communion office we need not consider, but it is often very helpful to go to Communion with one particular need in view, and to plead that need in the service. Is there anything which a sick person needs more than patience? Would it not be well to lift up your heart to God in supplication for this special grace? "We have need of patience," we read. Indeed we have. How hard it is not to

murmur nor rebel. "Submission to the will of God," it has been said, "is the most important, the hardest, and the last lesson we have to learn." When we have learnt it, and not till then, we may be fit to be translated to that place where His will is done perfectly.

I have seen a great picture called "The Resigned." It represents a long procession, and all who walk in it are afflicted in some way. Some are burdened, some are blind, halt, and lame, but none are rebellious; one man is playing on a flute; all are making the best of it; all are patient.

Surely this is wisdom. Does rebellion do any good? Look at those who take the advice of Job's wife and "curse God." Are they happier for it? Is there any balm, any alleviation in such an attitude? You feel that there is not. It only aggravates the evil; it shuts out the soul from all those softening and ripening influences which sorrow teaches.

But true patience is more than mere endurance. It is a glad and willing acceptance of the will of God, founded upon the assurance that He must know best; it is suffering with Christ, and as Christ suffered, in hopes of being glorified with Him. This

is what is meant by "patience having its perfect work." Whichever way your sickness turns, whether you "recover your bodily health" or "your soul depart from the body"—for life or for death, patience is a possession of inestimable value. May the Body and Blood of Christ thus strengthen and refresh your soul. If you bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy for His dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and render to Him humble thanks for His fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto His will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life. Amen.

THE ORDER FOR

THE

VISITATION OF THE SICK

¶ *When any person is sick, notice shall be given thereof to the Minister of the Parish; who, coming into the sick person's house, shall say,*

PEACE be to this house, and to all that dwell in it.

¶ *When he cometh into the sick man's presence he shall say, kneeling down,*

REMEMBER not, Lord, our iniquities, nor the iniquities of our forefathers: Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Answer. Spare us, good Lord.

¶ *Then the Minister shall say,*

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Minister. O Lord, save thy servant;

Answer. Which putteth *his* trust in thee.

Min. Send *him* help from thy holy place ;
Ans. And evermore mightily defend *him.*
Min. Let the enemy have no advantage of *him ;*
Ans. Nor the wicked approach to hurt *him.*
Min. Be unto *him*, O Lord, a strong tower,
Ans. From the face of *his* enemy.
Min. O Lord, hear our prayers ;
Ans. And let our cry come unto thee.

Minister.

O LORD, look down from heaven, behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant. Look upon *him* with the eyes of thy mercy, give *him* comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend *him* from the danger of the enemy, and keep *him* in perpetual peace and safety ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HEAR us, Almighty and most merciful God and Saviour ; extend thy accustomed goodness to this thy servant who is grieved with sickness. Sanctify, we beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to *him ;* that the sense of *his* weakness may add strength to *his* faith, and seriousness to *his* repentance : That, if it shall be thy good pleasure to restore *him* to *his* former health, *he* may lead the residue of *his* life in thy fear, and to thy glory : or else, give *him* grace so to take thy visitation, that, after this painful life ended, *he* may dwell with thee in life everlasting ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Minister exhort the sick person after this form, or other like.*

DEARLY beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you ; whether it be to try your patience for the example of others, and that your faith may be found

in the day of the Lord laudable, glorious, and honourable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father; know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and render unto him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto his will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life.

¶ *If the person visited be very sick, then the Curate may end his exhortation in this place, or else proceed.*

TAKE therefore in good part the chastisement of the Lord: For (as St. Paul saith in the twelfth Chapter to the Hebrews) whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. These words, good *brother*, are written in holy Scripture for our comfort and instruction; that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving, bear our heavenly Father's correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please his gracious goodness to visit us. And there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For he himself

went not up to joy, but first he suffered pain; he entered not into his glory before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life. Now therefore, taking your sickness, which is thus profitable for you, patiently, I exhort you, in the Name of God, to remember the profession which you made unto God in your Baptism. And forasmuch as after this life there is an account to be given unto the righteous Judge, by whom all must be judged, without respect of persons, I require you to examine yourself and your estate, both toward God and man; so that, accusing and condemning yourself for your own faults, you may find mercy at our heavenly Father's hand for Christ's sake, and not be accused and condemned in that fearful judgment. Therefore I shall rehearse to you the articles of our Faith, that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should, or no.

¶ *Here the Minister shall rehearse the Articles of the Faith, saying thus,*

Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?

And in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord? And that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the

Remission of sins; the Resurrection of the flesh; and everlasting life after death?

¶ *The sick person shall answer,*

ALL this I stedfastly believe.

¶ *Then shall the Minister examine whether he repent him truly of his sins, and be in charity with all the world; exhorting him to forgive, from the bottom of his heart, all persons that have offended him; and if he hath offended any other, to ask them forgiveness; and where he hath done injury or wrong to any man, that he make amends to the uttermost of his power. And if he hath not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his Debts, what he oweth, and what is owing unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health.*

¶ *These words before rehearsed may be said before the Minister begin his Prayer, as he shall see cause.*

¶ *The Minister should not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability to be liberal to the poor.*

¶ *Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which Confession, the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort.*

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ *And then the Priest shall say the Collect following.*

Let us pray.

O MOST merciful God, who, according to the multitude of thy mercies, dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more; Open thine eye of mercy upon this thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness.

Renew in *him*, most loving Father, whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by *his* own carnal will and frailness; preserve and continue this sick member in the unity of the Church; consider *his* contrition, accept *his* tears, assuage *his* pain, as shall seem to thee most expedient for *him*. And forasmuch as *he* putteth *his* full trust only in thy mercy, impute not unto *him his* former sins, but strengthen *him* with thy blessed Spirit; and when thou art pleased to take *him* hence, take *him* unto thy favour, through the merits of thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Minister say this Psalm.*

Psal. lxxi. *In te, Domine, speravi.*

In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion: but rid me, and deliver me in thy righteousness; incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

Be thou my strong hold, whereunto I may alway resort: thou hast promised to help me; for thou art my house of defence, and my castle.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ungodly: out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

For thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for: thou art my hope, even from my youth.

Through thee have I been holden up ever since I was born: thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb; my praise shall alway be of thee.

I am become as it were a monster unto many: but my sure trust is in thee.

O let my mouth be filled with thy praise: that I may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long.

Cast me not away in the time of age: forsake me not when my strength faileth me.

For mine enemies speak against me, and they that lay wait for my soul take their counsel together,

saying : God hath forsaken him, persecute him, and take him ; for there is none to deliver him.

Go not far from me, O God : my God, haste thee to help me.

Let them be confounded and perish that are against my soul : let them be covered with shame and dishonour that seek to do me evil.

As for me, I will patiently abide alway : and will praise thee more and more.

My mouth shall daily speak of thy righteousness and salvation : for I know no end thereof.

I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God : and will make mention of thy righteousness only.

Thou, O God, hast taught me from my youth up until now : therefore will I tell of thy wondrous works.

Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am greyheaded : until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to all them that are yet for to come.

Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, and great things are they that thou hast done : O God, who is like unto thee ?

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost ;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

¶ *Adding this.*

O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore thy defence ; and make thee know and feel, that there is none

other Name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

¶ *And after that shall say,*

UNTO God's gracious mercy and protection we commit thee. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, both now and evermore. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a sick child.

O ALMIGHTY God, and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death ; Look down from heaven, we humbly beseech thee, with the eyes of mercy upon this child now lying upon the bed of sickness : Visit *him*, O Lord, with thy salvation ; deliver *him* in thy good appointed time from *his* bodily pain, and save *his* soul for thy mercies' sake : That, if it shall be thy pleasure to prolong *his* days here on earth, *he* may live to thee, and be an instrument of thy glory, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in *his* generation ; or else receive *him* into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity. Grant this, O Lord, for thy mercies' sake, in the same thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need ; We fly unto thee for succour in behalf of this thy servant, here lying under thy hand in great weakness of body. Look graciously

upon *him*, O Lord; and the more the outward man decayeth, strengthen *him*, we beseech thee, so much the more continually with thy grace and holy Spirit in the inner man. Give *him* unfeigned repentance for all the errors of *his* life past, and stedfast faith in thy Son Jesus; that *his* sins may be done away by thy mercy, and *his* pardon sealed in heaven, before *he* go hence, and be no more seen. We know, O Lord, that there is no word impossible with thee; and that, if thou wilt, thou canst even yet raise *him* up, and grant *him* a longer continuance amongst us: Yet, forasmuch as in all appearance the time of *his* dissolution draweth near, so fit and prepare *him*, we beseech thee, against the hour of death, that after *his* departure hence in peace, and in thy favour, *his* soul may be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A commendatory Prayer for a sick person at the point of departure.

O ALMIGHTY God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons; We humbly commend the soul of this thy servant, our dear *brother*, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour; most humbly beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight. Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee. And teach us who survive, in this and other like daily spectacles of mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and so to number our days, that we

may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience.

O Blessed Lord, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts; We beseech thee, look down in pity and compassion upon this thy afflicted servant. Thou writest bitter things against *him*, and makest *him* to possess *his* former iniquities; thy wrath lieth hard upon *him*, and *his* soul is full of trouble: But, O merciful God, who hast written thy holy Word for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of thy holy Scriptures, might have hope; give *him* a right understanding of *himself*, and of thy threats and promises; that *he* may neither cast away *his* confidence in thee, nor place it anywhere but in thee. Give *him* strength against all *his* temptations, and heal all *his* distempers. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make *him* to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver *him* from fear of the enemy, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon *him*, and give *him* peace, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE
COMMUNION OF THE SICK

¶ *Forasmuch as all mortal men be subject to many sudden perils, diseases, and sicknesses, and ever uncertain what time they shall depart out of this life; therefore, to the intent they may be always in a readiness to die, whensoever it shall please Almighty God to call them, the Curates shall diligently from time to time (but especially in the time of pestilence, or other infectious sickness) exhort their Parishioners to the often receiving of the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, when it shall be publickly administered in the Church; that so doing, they may, in case of sudden visitation, have the less cause to be disquieted for lack of the same. But if the sick person be not able to come to the Church, and yet is desirous to receive the Communion in his house; then he must give timely notice to the Curate, signifying also how many there are to communicate with him, (which shall be three, or two at the least,) and having a convenient place in the sick man's house, with all things necessary so prepared, that the Curate may reverently minister, he shall there celebrate the holy Communion, beginning with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, here following.*

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY, everliving God, Maker of mankind, who dost correct those whom thou dost love, and chastise every one whom thou dost receive; We beseech thee to have mercy upon this thy servant visited with thine hand, and to grant that *he* may take *his* sickness patiently, and recover *his* bodily health, (if it be thy gracious will;) and whensoever *his* soul shall depart from the body, it may be without spot presented unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. Heb. xii. 5.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

The Gospel. St. John v. 24.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

¶ *Then shall the Priest say to them that come to receive the holy Communion,*

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

¶ *Then shall this general Confession be made, in the name of all those that are minded to receive the holy Communion, by one of the Ministers; both he and all the people kneeling humbly upon their knees, and saying,*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all

that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Priest (or the Bishop, being present) stand up, and turning himself to the people, pronounce this Absolution.*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

HEAR what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him.

COME unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *St. Matt.* xi. 28.

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John* iii. 16.

Hear also what Saint Paul saith.

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 *Tim.* i. 15.

Hear also what Saint John saith.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 *St. John* ii. 1, 2.

¶ *After which the Priest shall proceed, saying,*

LIFT up your hearts.

Answer. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Priest. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answer. It is meet and right so to do.

¶ *Then shall the Priest turn to the Lord's Table, and say,*

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, * Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

* *These words* [Holy Father] *must be omitted on* Trinity-Sunday.

¶ *Here shall follow the Proper Preface, according to the time, if there be any specially appointed; or else immediately shall follow,*

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.

Upon Christmas-day, *and seven days after.*

Because thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for us; who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore with Angels, *&c.*

Upon Easter-day, *and seven days after.*

But chiefly are we bound to praise thee for the glorious Resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: for he is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with Angels, *&c.*

Upon Ascension-day, *and seven days after.*

Through thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who after his most glorious Resurrection manifestly appeared to all his Apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven to prepare a place for us; that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore with Angels, *&c.*

Upon Whit-Sunday, *and six days after.*

THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord; according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations; whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore with Angels, *&c.*

Upon the Feast of Trinity *only.*

WHO art one God, one Lord; not one only Person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. Therefore with Angels, *&c.*

¶ *After each of which Prefaces shall immediately be sung or said,*

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.

¶ *Then shall the Priest, kneeling down at the Lord's Table, say in the name of all them that shall receive the Communion this Prayer following.*

WE do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ,

and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

¶ *When the Priest, standing before the Table, hath so ordered the Bread and Wine, that he may with the more readiness and decency break the Bread before the people, and take the Cup into his hands, he shall say the Prayer of Consecration, as followeth.*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again; Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood: who, in the same night that he was betrayed, * took Bread; and, when he had given thanks, † he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, ‡ this is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper he § took the Cup; and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this ‖ is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. *Amen.*

* *Here the Priest is to take the Paten into his hands:*

† *And here to break the Bread:*

‡ *And here to lay his hand upon all the Bread.*

§ *Here he is to take the Cup into his hand:*

‖ *And here to lay his hand upon every vessel (be it Chalice or Flagon) in which there is any Wine to be consecrated.*

¶ *Then shall the Priest first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and after minister unto them that are appointed to communicate with the sick, and last of all to the sick person. And when he delivereth the Bread to any one, he shall say,*

THE Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

¶ *And the Minister that delivereth the Cup to any one shall say,*

THE Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

¶ *If the consecrated Bread or Wine be all spent before all have communicated, the Priest is to consecrate more according to the Form before prescribed; beginning at* [Our Saviour Christ in the same night, *&c.*] *for the blessing of the Bread; and at* [Likewise after Supper, *&c.*] *for the blessing of the Cup.*

¶ *When all have communicated, the Minister shall return to the Lord's Table, and reverently place upon it what remaineth of the consecrated Elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth.*

¶ *Then shall the Priest say the Lord's Prayer, the people repeating after him every Petition.*

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

¶ *After shall be said as followeth.*

O LORD and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and

thanksgiving ; most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee ; humbly beseeching thee, that all we, who are partakers of this holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service ; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *Amen.*

Or this.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us ; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people ; and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in ; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall be said or sung,*

GLORY be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

¶ *Then the Priest (or Bishop, if he be present) shall let them depart with this Blessing.*

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen.*

¶ *But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Curate, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, the Curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his Soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.*

¶ *When the sick person is visited, and receiveth the holy*

Communion all at one time, then the Priest, for more expedition, shall cut off the form of the Visitation at the Psalm [In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, *&c.*] *and go straight to the Communion.*

¶ *In the time of the Plague, Sweat, or such other like contagious times of sickness or diseases, when none of the Parish or neighbours can be gotten to communicate with the sick in their houses, for fear of the infection, upon special request of the diseased, the Minister may only communicate with him.*

THE END

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